



Land Use & Environment Committee

Status Report on Downtown Sanitation Plan and Public Restroom Pilots

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Title

Status Report on Downtown Sanitation Plan and Public Restroom Pilots

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive the briefing and provide any guidance. Move to forward a recommendation to City Council to remove the portable restroom located in the Olympia/Franklin lot and return the Percival West restroom to its normal operating schedule (completely closed in the winter, open the rest of the year from dawn to dusk.)

Report

Issue:

Whether to receive an update on the work completed to date on a Downtown Sanitation (downtown restrooms) Master Plan and the public restroom pilot project, and whether to move forward with the staff recommendation to remove the portable restroom located in the Olympia/Franklin lot and return the Percival West restroom to its normal operating schedule

Staff Contact:

Mark Rentfrow, Downtown Liaison, Community Planning and Development (CP&D) 360.570.3798
Amy Buckler, Senior Planner, CP&D, 360.570.5847

Presenter(s):

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner, CP&D
Mark Rentfrow, Downtown Liaison
Gary Franks, Parks Maintenance Manager
Adam Young, Young Architecture, City's consultant

Background and Analysis:

Olympia's Downtown Strategy calls for the City to locate public restrooms downtown as one of its clean and safe efforts, with the assumption this action would help to reduce the impact of human waste in public spaces. Accordingly, in 2017 the City hired Young Architecture (consultants with

experience siting restrooms in other communities) to help develop a master plan to identify best practices, needs, locations, timing and costs for potential future downtown restrooms. The City Council directed that the plan should consider restrooms for all, and specifically for people who are street dependent as well as visitors. Also in 2017, the City embarked on a pilot project to test the viability of 24-hour public restrooms in five locations.

Staff's presentation will cover:

- The Master Plan process so far,
- Results of research into existing conditions and needs,
- Best practices for siting, operating and designing public restrooms,
- Results from the pilot projects, including available data,
- Future locations of interest for public restrooms, and
- Preliminary next steps

Attached is a list of best practices for siting, operating and designing restrooms, which are derived from other cities and Olympia's experience. Public restrooms are commonly susceptible to abuse, and these best practices are intended to curb or mitigate negative behaviors so that clean, safe restrooms can be maintained for all. The attachment highlights where best practices were employed in each of the five pilot projects; during the briefing staff will provide more information about these practices and how employing them or not employing them has affected conditions in each of the pilots.

Conditions in Olympia/Franklin Lot and Percival West

Staff is requesting the Committee forward a recommendation to City Council to remove the portable restroom located in the Olympia/Franklin lot, and return the Percival West restroom to its normal operating schedule (completely closed in the winter, open the rest of the year from dawn to dusk.)

When compared to the best practices, we find these restrooms are located in less active places, and they are not sufficiently designed for 24-hour permanent use. Regularly recorded misuse of these restrooms presents unsafe conditions for our community, including:

- Drug dealing and drug using
- Prostitution
- Graffiti
- Vandalism
- Unsanitary conditions occurring on an almost daily/nightly basis despite a cleaning schedule (trash, biohazard deposits - vomit, feces, spit, blood)

At the briefing, staff will provide available data regarding restroom usage, human waste in the vicinity, needle counts, maintenance and operation schedules and costs.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

From business surveys, public outreach events at Sylvester Park, the Farmer's Market and an open house at City Hall, staff and consultants heard interest in providing public restrooms in order to serve people who are street dependent, as well as visitors, and as a possible means of reducing human waste in public spaces.

Options:

Receive the briefing and provide any guidance; also

- 1) Move to forward a recommendation to City Council to remove the portable restroom located in the Olympia/Franklin lot and return the Percival West restroom to its normal operating schedule (completely closed in the winter, open the rest of the year from dawn to dusk); or
- 2) Do not forward a recommendation to the City Council at this time.

Financial Impact:

Under current conditions, the annual cost of continuing to operate and maintain the:

- Olympia/Franklin portable restroom is \$29,100
- Percival West restroom is \$80,600

Attachments:

Best Practices Chart